

## [J. W. Hagerty]

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[Folkstuff - Rangelore?]

Gauthier, Sheldon F.

Rangelore

Tarrant Co., Dist.#7 #7

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FEC

J. W. Hagerty, 60 living at 500 Wilkinson St., Fort Worth, Tex., was born June 10, 1878,, on a farm, a tract of land now known as Cedar Springs district of Dallas, Dallas co., Tex. The street now known as Cedar Springs Road, passes by the former home of Hagerty. It was a mere trail when he lived at the place. Many herds of cattle were driven over the trail during the days of Hagerty's youth. In those days, the territory around Dallas was an open range with a few scattered farms that were fenced against cattle. Hagerty's father, with his family, moved to Rains co., Tex., in [1886?]. Rains co. was then an open range with many ranches. The first wire fence was built enclosing the Harpole ranch, about the year 1887. The fence was cut and destroyed twice, before the builder was successful in his venture. The Hagerty family moved to Forth Worth, Tex. about the latter part 1887. J.W. Hagerty recalls some of the early [scenes?] in Forth Worth. His story:

“My place of birth was in Dallas county, on a farm, and the event took place June 10, 1878. My father cultivated a small tract of land located where Cedar Springs is now in the the present city of Dallas. The street called Cedar Springs Road was a trail running

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past our home. My grandfather, E. Roark, lived near us on a tract of land called the [Cole?] Place.

"There were a few cultivated fields in the vicinity, but cattle ranches occupied a vast majority of the territory.

"Almost every day one or more herds of cattle were driven past our home on the trail. Frequently, a flock of sheep would be seen passing by. These herds of cattle numbered from a few hundred to several thousand. C12-2/11[41?] - Texas

"Cattle buyers traveled through the country, buying cattle in the range country east of Dallas. After they had bargained for the number desired, the buyers would gather the cattle as they traveled back through the territory. Each day, as they traveled and gathered, the herd would increase in numbers, until some of the herds were exceedingly large by the time the cattle were being driven past our house.

"I can remember one herd which started to pass our home one morning while our family was eating breakfast, and cattle continued to travel past the entire day. The scene is still vivid in my mind. I can see the cowboys, with their ten-gallon hats, chaps, high-heel boots, spurs, and with bandanas around their necks, as they rode at the side of the herd to keep the cattle pointed in the proper direction. There was a cross trail a short distance west of our home, and two cowboys were stationed there all day, to prevent any of the cattle from trailing off over the cross trail.

"By this time, I was able to ride a horse. The day the large herd drifted through, I made some money. I mounted my pony and carried drinking water to the cowboys who were guarding the cross trail. My mother suggested that the boys might be thirsty and that I should carry some water to them. I did so, and each gave me a coin on my first trip. This act of the boys gave me interest in my work, and I assure you they never ran short of drinking water.

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"I do not know the destination of those herds, but I do recall hearing conversations relating to where some of the cattle were being driven.

"During the period of the early '80's there was a general movement of cattle ranches to West Texas.

"After the railroads built into East Texas, the land was gradually settled by people who began to farm the land. The open range disappeared simultaneously with the development of the farms. 3 Therefore, cattlemen, moved their ranches to the West, where the open range still existed. However, some of the cattle were being driven to the Northern ranges for fattening and sale in the Northern markets.

"I do not know to what extent sheep ranching existed in East Texas those days, but, judging from the frequency that flocks of sheep were driven past our home, there must have been a great number of sheep raised in the territory east of Dallas.

"My father moved to Rains county, Tex. about 1886. He located on the edge of a prairie near the Sabine River. In those days, Rains county was an open and free range territory. There were a few farms, which were located along the timber lands adjacent to the river.

"The M.K.& T. railroad ran near our home, and we could see a train approaching from a distance of several miles. I was about 10 years old at the time we lived there, and we children would watch the trains running across the prairie. The trains were compelled to stop frequently, while the crew chased cattle off the track. Once in a while the trains would hit an animal and had to stop. When this occurred, we children would mount our horses and ride to where the train was stopped. The engine was always an object of interest to us.

"While we were watching the train coming across the prairie one day, it hit a steer and the engine jumped the track and turned over. The moment we saw what had happened we mounted our horses and started for the scene of the wreck, riding at a fast speed to

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see what had happened. We anticipated a thrill at sight of an engine laying on its side along with a couple of smashed wooden coaches. But we were disappointed. 4 "Just as we arrived at where the wreck was located, a party of Indians came out of one of the coaches. They were dressed in their Indian costume of the day, wearing various kinds of head dress, all more or less decorated, with feathers, and with bright colored shawls draped over their shoulders. Our parents, from the time we could understand, had warned us about Indians. However, we had never been bothered by Indians, but we were taught to keep out of their way and to run for a hiding place in the event we saw an Indian approaching. Due to this teaching, when we saw the Indians alighting from the coach we spurred our horses towards home at their fastest speed.

"Father did not remain in Rains county long. Owing to our short stay, I do not recall the names of many of the ranches which were located adjacent to our home. I recall just one or two of them, and one especially, the Harpole ranch, because Harpole had considerable trouble.

"The Harpole ranch was the first ranch which attempted to build a fence in Rains county. It was during the latter part of '86, or the first part of '87. Mr. Harpole's ranch was adjacent to our home and I saw the start of the fence building.

"Mr. Harpole had just about completed half of the fencing of his range when the trouble started. The majority of the ranchmen were opposed to fencing the range. They argued, that to fence would destroy the cattle business, especially for the small rancher and those without sufficient funds to buy or lease land and build a fence.

"They were unable to prevent a rancher from fencing his range by going into court, because the Law stated clearly that a property owner had the right to enclose his land with a fence. In fact, all cultivated lands were fenced. These cultivated tracts were small and located 5 adjacent to the creeks or river bottoms, and were not interfering with the open

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range. As the opposers could not secure help from the law, they decided to use their own method to protect and maintain a free and open range.

“The men who were opposed to fencing organized a crew of fence cutters and went to work. These men cut each wire twice between each post, and cut each post about half way of its length out of the ground.

“Several miles of fence were destroyed when morning arrived. The posts and wire were rendered useless for further use.

“Harpole reported the act to the sheriff, who began a search for the deprecators, but those involved in the depredation were very secretive. The sheriff was unable to apprehend the culprits, but the rumor was that if the man were caught it would mean a penitentiary sentence for them.

“Harpole rebuilt the fence and it was guarded for about two weeks. During this time there was no attempt made to destroy the fence. Therefore, Harpole let up on his vigilance, thinking that the fence cutters had become fearful of the consequences that might result from this destruction of property.

“It was only a few days after Harpole had ceased to guard his fence till it was again destroyed.

“Following the second cutting incident, the sheriff succeeded in securing the names of almost every person connected with the destruction of the fence. Then followed wholesale arrests of citizens who took part in the deprecation.

“The charges against the fence cutters came on for trial, and 6 many convictions resulted from the trials. The convicted man appealed their cases to a higher court. The cases were fought in the courts for a long period of time, but finally several men were compelled to serve time in the penitentiary.

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"After the court trials and convictions, fence cutting ceased. Then followed more fencing of land, and it was not long until the open range disappeared. The cattle industry of East Texas was transferred to other range country, principally to West Texas.

"During the latter part of 1887, my father moved to Fort Worth. At this time Fort Worth was not a city, but instead it was a large village. The principal business streets were Main, Rusk (now Commerce) and Houston. The major number of business places were on Main. The business started at Weatherford and extended South to Fifth Street as the extreme Southern location of business houses. However, almost all the business houses were located north of Third Street.

"At Fifth & Main Sts. was located what we called the '[Fakers?] Block'. It was a vacant tract of land where the 'high pitch' business, a business which flourished those days, was operated by men who made their living by faking the public. Almost every day one or more of these itinerant merchants would be at the fakir block selling his wares to the gullible folks. There was [sold?] everything one could imagine and a lot of stuff one would not think was on the market. Medicine that would cure any disease, remedies that would grow hair on a slick head. Also, if one had straight hair, he could buy a concoction to make it kinky, or if one had kinky hair, a concoction could be bought to make the hair straight. 7 "A great amount of jewelry was sold on the 'fakir block' including diamonds of several carat weight, for just a few dollars.

"There was no restrictions to the methods used, by these itinerant merchants. The rule was that if anyone was gullible enough to expect a bargain from these men, he should be made to pay for his experience. In other words, the rule was, as I heard a lawyer once explain, 'the buyer beware'.

"One day a fellow set up his stand at the 'fakir block' and offered for sale a concoction that would make curly hair straight. 'Yes, sir, boys', he said, 'when this salve is applied to curly hair the kinks leave as if by magic. I shall be here for at least two weeks advertising and

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appointing agents. In the event anyone is dissatisfied with this wonderful salve, return the box to me. You will receive the dollar you have paid and a dollar for your trouble'.

"The colored boys, in large numbers, bought the stuff as though they were getting a \$5.00 gold coin for their dollar, after the 'wizard' had demonstrated his concoction on a negro's head. The fakir did a tremendous business for three or four days, then disappeared and could not be found at his usual place of business. But soon, many colored men and women did call to see him. All these colored folks had a complaint and desired a refund of their money and some additional coin.

"There was no complaint about the concoction not taking out the kinks, but it did more than the purchasers expected of it. It not only took out the kinks, but removed the hair from the user's head. A bald headed negro is an unusual sight, but Fort Worth had a great number for a time after the salve salesman advertised his concoction. Until their hair grew out, one could tell the suckers as they passed by. 8 "Everything went those days. It was just a matter of a fellow being able to put his deal through.

"The Cattlemen's Convention was head in Fort Worth yearly those days. During the convention days, the lid was taken completely off and the town was in fact, 'hot'. Of course, there were some citizens who yelled long and loud about the town being turned over to the Satanic Majesty. These people would call at the District Attorney's office, but it seemed that this official would become ill each time the convention date arrived. It was necessary for the attorney to take a trip to some health resort, starting a few days before the convention commenced.

"Geo. Holland's Theatre was one of the principal show places. It was located at 12th and Jones Sts. The place occupied an entire block and provided entertainment ranging from a wild animal zoo, to a girl show, and some of the girls were not any too tame. There were vaudeville acts which sizzled and the theatre drew the crowd.

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"Holland's Theatre was the center of what we called 'Hell's Half Acre', and it was an appropriate name. If there was anything ever invented by man to attract the base instinct of the human which was not put on at Holland's, it was an oversight on the part of the management.

"Ranchmen and cowboys visited the town in crowds every day. While sidewalks were few and scattered, but when a crowd of cowboys were approaching one could hear them a block away, because of the jingling spurs. The sound of the spurs could be heard the entire day, especially in the main part of the town. One could always see a number of mounted cowboys riding through the streets. 9 "The streets those days were no better than a trail through the open country, and I presume rougher because of the excessive use. Mud holes and ruts were the conspicuous part of the streets. I have seen many teams bogged down in the vicinity of Fifth and Main Streets. Front Street at the time was low, and when the weather was wet it was a mess. There was a stairway running from the street up to the high ground where the depot was located The depot was then east of Main Street.

"The leading hotel of those days was the Merchants Hotel. It was operated by Lauerio Genocio. It was to this hotel that Jim Courtright was lured by a U.S. Marshal, and which started the Courtright episode. The marshal pretended that he desired to engage Courtright to do some investigating. At the time, Courtright was operating a detective agency.

"The U.S. Marshal was from the Territory of [Tex?]., and had a warrant for Courtright's arrest on a murder charge.

"Courtright was held a prisoner at the hotel, and prevented from sending word to his friends about his plight. His predicament was discovered and his friends became busy in his behalf. Word about Courtright was spread and half of the town was at the depot when the officers arrived there with their prisoner to take the T. & P. train West. Judge [Head?], then District Judge, was at the depot and issued a writ, ordering Courtright be



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turned over to the Tarrant county sheriff, until the legal custody of the prisoner could be decided. Courtright was finally turned back to the New Mexico officials and the affair ended by his escaping from the officers, which was made possible by Fort Worth citizens. 10 “The citizens ganged the officials, and their prisoner, while they were eating a meal at a restaurant, before leaving on the train. By some mysterious means, two guns were found by Courtright under the table where he sat. Suddenly, he pulled the guns on the officers and walked out of the restaurant, while men held the arms of the officers.

“Our leading citizens of the town were involved in making the arrangements for Courtright's escape, and the publisher of the Evening Mail newspaper took the lead.

“I often think of Capt. B.B.Paddock, who published a paper called the Democrat. He devoted a large part of his time to boosting the town. Paddock predicted a future for Fort Worth with a possible 20,000 population. While thinking of those days, I wonder what Paddock would think while seeing the Fort Worth of today.